

Ion Creanga

THE FOX PLAYS THE BEAR A TRICK





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The Fox Plays the Bear a Trick



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Once upon a time there was a cunning fox as many others. The whole night through he was looking for food but could not find it anywhere. When the day time came the fox went to the edge of the road and lay

there under a bush thinking what to do to find some food.

As he was sitting with the head on her front paws suddenly a smell of fish reached his nose. Raising his head and looking downhill along the road he saw a cart with two bulls.

"Well!", thought the fox. "Here's the food I have been waiting for."

Then he immediately got out of the bush and stretched himself in the middle of the road pretending to be dead.

When the cart approached the fox, the owner of the cart, a peasant, saw the fox and thinking he was really dead, stopped the bulls:

"Oh! Ho! Stop, stop!"

The peasant approached the fox examined, him closely and seeing that he wasn't even breathing, said:

"Oh dear! How did it happen that this fox died here?! Hey!.. What a nice fur-trimmed jacket I'll make of this fox fur for my wife!"

Saying this he snatched the fox, carried him to the cart and threw him on the fish. Then he shouted at the bulls:

"Haw, Joyan! Ho hoa, Bouryan!"

The bulls started to go.

The peasant walked along with the bulls and urged them to go quickly to get home as soon as possible to skin the fox. But as soon as the bulls started the fox began to push down the fish out of the cart. The peasant urged the bulls, the cart squeaked and the fish fell out of the cart.

The villain of the fox threw out a lot of fish on the road, then jumped down and quickly gathered the







fish on a pile and carried it to his lair and began to eat, because he was very, very hungry! At that very moment the bear came.

“Good appetite, godfather! Oh!!! What a lot of fish you have got! Give me some, I’m so hungry!”

“I wish you may get it, godfather, but I haven’t





worked so hard to satisfy your appetite. If you care so much for it, go and put your tail into the lake as I did and you'll have a lot of fish to eat."

"Oh, be so kind and teach me how to do it. I have no idea of fishing."

Then the fox grinned and said:

"Oh, godfather! Don't you know that heed can take you anywhere and teach you everything? Listen! If you really want to eat fish, then, go to that large lake near the forest's border, in the evening, put your tail into the water and sit there motionlessly till morning and then pull the tail out of the water with might. You'll get a great deal of fish, may be twice or thrice more than I have got."

The bear, without saying anything, ran to the lake near the forests's border and put his tail into the water!..

It so happened that during that night a cold wind was blowing that could freeze the tongue in one's mouth and even the ashes in the fire. So the water in the lake froze in no time and the bear's tail remained there caught as in pincers. After a while the bear couldn't resist the cold and pain and pulled the tail with force. Instead of fish the poor bear remained without tail.

The bear growled ferociously and jumped with pain, and, angry with the fox that deceived him, went to beat her to death. But the cunning fox knew how to shelter herself from the angry bear. He got out of her lair and entered a nearby tree hole. Seeing the coming bear he shouted:

"Hey, godfather! What's happened to you? Did the fish eat your tail or have you been too greedy and wanted to leave the lake without any fish?"











Seeing that the fox was laughing at him the bear got furious and rushed to the tree hole. But the hole entrance being too narrow the bear couldn't pass in. Then he found a stick with a hook and made snatches

at the fox to get her out and punish... But when he would catch his paw he cried:

“Oh, pull out, you foolish bear! I don’t care you pulling the tree...”

But when he would get hold of the tree he shouted:

“Oh, dear me! Don’t pull so hard, you’ll break my paw!”

The bear tried in vain to get the fox out of the tree hole, but he couldn’t do anything.

And this was how the fox deceived the bear!





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